

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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TAGS: PFOR, CZ, RQ, US

SUBJECT: RUDE PRAVO ARTICLE ON PUERTO RICO

REF.: A) PRAGUE 1345, B) 1358

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR SHERER

1. DEPARTMENT AWARE THAT CHARGE BRIEFLY RAISED SUBJECT
ARTICLE WITH DEPUTY HEAD OF MFA SIXTH DEPARTMENT (REFTEL B).
HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF VITRIOLIC, UNSUBSTANTIATED AND TOTALLY
UNWARRANTED CHARGES IN RUDE PRAVO ABOUT US POLICY TOWARDS
AND RELATIONSHIP WITH PUERTO RICO AND CONSIDERING FACT THAT
CZECHOSLOVAKS DID NOT HESITATE TO COMPLAIN TO US ABOUT VE
DAY PAMPHLET AND PUBLICATION IN US PRESS OF EXTRACTS FROM
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SMIRKOVSKY'S MEMOIRS, WE BELIEVE A MORE FORMAL PROTEST TO

MFA IN ORDER. SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOLLOW (RESPONSE TO "MASSIVE STERILIZATION" ALLEGATION BEING POUCHED SEPARATELY).

-- PUERTO RICANS CHOSE COMMONWEALTH STATUS OF FREE ASSOCIATION IN 1952 ELECTIONS. THAT POSITION REAFFIRMED IN SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS IN 1956, 1960, 1964, 1968 AND 1972. IN 1972, 51.1 OF THOSE VOTING CAST BALLOTS FOR POPULAR DEMOCRAT TICKET, WHICH FAVORS PRESENT COMMONWEALTH STATUS,

WHILE NEW PROGRESSIVES, WHO DESIRE STATEHOOD, RECEIVED 44. VAST MAJORITY THUS CLEARLY FAVORS ASSOCIATION WITH US IN SOME FORM AND HAS REJECTED OPTION OF ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT PUERTO RICO.

-- US INFORMED UNGA IN 1953 THAT SELF-GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN PR AND THUS PR WAS NO LONGER APPROPRIATE AREA FOR UN CONSIDERATION OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES. UNGA ENDORSED US DECISION IN 1953 AND REAFFIRMED THAT POSITION IN 1971 BY REFUSING TO INCLUDE PUERTO RICO ON ITS AGENDA FOR NON SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES.

-- IN SUM, STATUS OF PR HAS LONG BEEN SETTLED BY PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO AND, IN ANY CASE, IS STRICTLY US INTERNAL MATTER. WE NOTE INCONSISTENCY IN CZECHOSLOVAK POSITION IN PROTESTING EMBASSY'S DISTRIBUTION OF VE DAY PAMPHLET, WHICH CZECHOSLOVAKS REGARDED AS INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, AND PUBLICATION OF SLANDEROUS ATTACK ON US RELATIONSHIP WITH PUERTO RICO IN PRINCIPAL CZECHOSLOVAK PARTY ORGAN.

2. EMBASSY MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER PROTESTING DIRECTLY TO EDITOR OF RUDE PRAVO. IN THIS REGARD, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY OFFICIALS HERE HAVE EASY ACCESS TO US PRESS. WASHINGTON POST ALSO PUBLISHED LETTER BY FORMER CZECHOSLOVAK AMBASSADOR SPACIL CRITICIZING AN EARLIER LETTER BY SENATOR GRAVEL REGARDING CZECHOSLOVAK CLAIMS PROBLEM. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW RUDE PRAVO OFFICIALS REACT TO EMBASSY DEMARCHE.

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